

Province runs short on gas pump stickers; Meanwhile, local man offers alternative version showing value of rebates

The Toronto Star

September 2, 2019 Monday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A4

Length: 548 words

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Body

Just two days after the provincial government made carbon pricing stickers mandatory on gas pumps across Ontario, the website where retailers are supposed to order replacement decals was out of stock on Sunday.

A letter sent to retailers told them they can order replacement stickers at the Publications Ontario eCommerce store, and noted that they face warnings or fines for not having the stickers in place. Retailers whose decals are vandalized are also required to post new ones as soon as possible.

The "Federal Carbon Tax Transparency Sticker" webpage advises gas retailers who have "not received stickers in the mail, or did not receive the right quantity of stickers," to order the mandatory stickers free of charge online. However, decals in both English and French were listed as "out of stock" on Sunday afternoon.

A spokesperson for Energy Minister Greg Rickford said Sunday that all orders had been fulfilled as of Friday, and additional stickers have been ordered to help meet demand.

But while the government was out of its stickers, which state "The federal carbon tax will cost you," Joe Moed had lots to give away.

When Moed learned in April about the Progressive Conservative government's sticker campaign - and the fines of up to \$10,000 that could be levied against retailers who did not comply - he got "very upset and angry," he told the Star in an interview at Nathan Phillips Square on Sunday afternoon.

So he printed his own.

"Basically I went out and rage-bought 5,000 stickers," Moed said, adding that he feels the Ford government's stickers tell "half the story" by not including information about rebates that go hand in hand with the federal carbon levy.

"It's a lie by omission. It's misleading and I wanted to take some direct action against it," he said.

The design on Moed's stickers was lifted from a tweet he found from federal Environment Minister Catherine McKenna, which showed the increasing value of Ottawa's "climate action incentive" rebates.

Moed said he has already recouped his costs to make the stickers through donations from supporters, and plans to donate any other money they generate to charity.

He said he has mailed 2,800 stickers to "every corner" of the province, from Thunder Bay to Chatham.

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He set aside another 1,000 stickers to hand out in front of Toronto's city hall on Sunday afternoon.

Moed says he acknowledges that the information on the province's sticker is "strictly true," but adds that it got under his skin because "it just omits half the story."

Ann Pennington, who picked up one of Moed's stickers at Nathan Phillips Square, agreed.

"Our government is using the force of the government to force private business owners to promote partisan propaganda that is not true - or certainly not the whole picture," she said. "I don't think it's OK that the government is telling half the story."

"They're supposed to represent all of us. It's wrong."

Moed is not the only one with an alternative sticker campaign. Ontario Green party Leader Mike Schreiner has unveiled his party's own stickers, which warn that "climate change will cost us more," outlining the risks of inaction against climate change.

"We gotta do something to stop these characters," a woman quipped as she passed Moed a \$20 bill, leaving with a stack of about 100 stickers.

Classification

Language: ENGLISH

Document-Type: COLUMN

Publication-Type: NEWSPAPER

Subject: CARBON TAX (90%); FINES & PENALTIES (90%); GOVERNMENT & PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (90%); PRICES (90%); REGIONAL & LOCAL GOVERNMENTS (90%); GOVERNMENT ADVISORS & MINISTERS (89%); SALES REBATES (89%); CLIMATE ACTION (78%); ENERGY DEPARTMENTS (78%); INTERVIEWS (78%); NEGATIVE PERSONAL NEWS (78%); ENVIRONMENTAL DEPARTMENTS (73%); OUTPUT & DEMAND (73%); ELECTRONIC COMMERCE (72%); ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES (60%)

Industry: CARBON TAX (90%); RETAIL & WHOLESALE TRADE (90%); RETAILERS (90%); SALES REBATES (89%); ENERGY & UTILITIES (78%); ENERGY DEPARTMENTS (78%); GAS STATIONS (78%); NATURAL GAS DISTRIBUTION (78%); ELECTRONIC COMMERCE (72%)

Geographic: TORONTO, ON, CANADA (79%); OTTAWA, ON, CANADA (73%); ONTARIO, CANADA (88%)

Load-Date: September 2, 2019